

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND BICYCLE COMMITTEE**

Fiscal Year 2005

The Public Transportation and Bicycle Committee's (PTBC) primary purposes include reviewing proposals involving public transportation policy, advising the Select Board and Town Meeting on transportation-related articles, conducting specific transportation studies and proposing specific initiatives to enhance services to the community. The Committee is dedicated to encouraging and supporting transportation alternatives to the automobile.

### **Bus Services and Planning:**

As in past years, bus services face pressure because of state funding limitations. The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) has withdrawn subsidies for some bus routes, including Amherst's "outreach" runs. The PTBC has spent considerable energy trying to preserve the existing service and restore state funding. The outreach routes have been scaled back to reduce costs, but basic service has been maintained. Money from the Transportation Fund was used to support the continuation of "outreach" bus service. This is the first time the Transportation Fund money has been used to directly support public transportation. The PTBC continues to work to explore ways to optimize "outreach" and other bus services and secure more state funding.

The PTBC has elected a representative to participate in a regional transportation committee developed in response to the loss of state funding for the "M40" express bus from Smith College to the University of Massachusetts. This regional committee has also worked to restore threatened cuts to PVTA, our Regional Transit Authority (RTA). The committee has expressed its concerns to state officials over the lack of equity in transit funding in the state. Most, if not all, feel that western Massachusetts should share in the one-cent sales tax that is used to fund the MBTA. The regional committee has also worked to address concerns about bus service for the new malls on Route 9.

### **Bicycle Facilities and Planning:**

The Bicycle Subcommittee, which consists of Van Kaynor and Ted White, has advocated for the inclusion of bike lanes and bike-friendly curbing, as well as other bicycling issues, as the Town enhances or performs maintenance on roadways. Van Kaynor personally introduced a warrant article to remove the "temporary" parking meters from the area in front of the Dickinson Museum and restore a bike lane there. This controversial warrant article, which was supported by the PTBC, has increased focus on parking in the area surrounding the Dickinson Museum and resulted in the reinvigoration of a Parking Commission to study the problem and make recommendations.

### **Pedestrian Facilities and Planning:**

The PTBC, particularly Walter Wolnik, remains focused on pedestrian issues, including snow removal and sidewalk paving issues. This year there has been particular focus on off-road extension of pedestrian access to more of the Town through the development of multi-use trails, and using the Town's new GIS system to both document existing trails and look for opportunities to develop new ones.

### **Developing a transportation or comprehensive plan:**

The PTBC remains supportive of the idea of developing a transportation plan or a comprehensive plan with a transportation component. We continue to believe a multi-modal, sustainable approach to transportation planning and investment is essential. We look forward to opportunities to work to prepare for Amherst's transportation needs.

The Committee voted to have Walter Wolnik be the PTBC representative to the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

#### Committee Membership:

##### Members:

Regrettably the committee has lost Tracy Zafian and Molly Falsetti-Yu to the demands of parenting. Current members are:

Richard Alcorn (Chair), Eli Cooper, Van Kaynor, Frank Wells, Ted White, Walter Wolnik (Secretary)

Select Board: Robie Hubley (liaison)

##### Associate Members and Staff Participants:

Lorna Peterson, Five College Inc.; Al Byam, UMass Transit; Glenn Barrington, UMass Transit; Guilford Mooring, Amherst Public Works Department Superintendent (staff liaison); Niels la Cour, Amherst Planning Department.